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Education and Its Institutions

Zachary Purvis

Introduction

Among Protestants, G. W. F. Hegel once quipped, ‘our universities and schools are our churches’ (Hegel 1969, 272). That contentious declaration is vivid testimony to the fact that, for theological education, the nineteenth century was at once one of the most strikingly creative, challenging, and tumultuous periods in the history of Christian thought—for Protestants and Catholics alike. Patterns of both deconfessionalization and theological renewal, changes in church-state relations, and the rise of the modern research university in Berlin—whose principal intellectual architect was none other than the ‘Church Father’ of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Schleiermacher—all contributed to a remarkable transformation of theological study over the course of the modern era and the momentous displacement of the erstwhile ‘queen of the sciences’. Some analogous tendencies—subdued and modulated according to different contexts—would reach Orthodoxy in the mid-twentieth century, and thus fall outside the scope here.

Until recently, theology’s history as an academic discipline has tended to attract two kinds of scholars: those concerned primarily with internal debates and doctrinal controversies, and those concerned with external and institutional questions. Yet, to modify Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s comment, institutions and ideas, like religious movements, are like ‘barrels of cider fermenting in the basement . . . one sets the other in motion; *one* does not move by itself’ (Lessing 1976, 715). Both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ stories must be combined to understand the changing character of theology as an academic discipline. Indeed, while the cultural, political, and social changes of modernity led to the demise of certain forms of theological education, they also contributed to (and, in turn, were influenced by) new forms of enquiry and institutional arrangements.

Nearly from its beginnings, Christian reflection has included a tradition of ‘theology’ as a knowledge of God and divine things, but the institutional developments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries added to this the sense of ‘theology’ as a self-conscious, scholarly enterprise. Only with the formation of universities in places like Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Padua did theology begin to emerge as an academic discipline. Before this, in fact, scholars used terms like *sacra pagina*, *sacra doctrina*, *sacrum studiorum*, and *sacra eruditio* to describe Christian learning, with *theologia* only coming into normal usage around the time of Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). Through the practices of Boethius (b.480) and Peter Abelard (1079–1142), but especially through the spread of universities and the first faculties of theology in the thirteenth century, *theologia* gained terminological precision as a discrete academic field. In fact, ‘the word *theologia* first became established in general use in association with the university term *facultas theologica*’ (Geyer 1964, 137).

The dawn of the nineteenth century found theology’s inclusion among the other traditional faculties of the university (medicine, law, and philosophy)—and the continued existence of universities themselves—cast into doubt across Europe. By the century’s twilight, though, theology had taken pains to establish itself as a modern, critical, rigorous science on par in some sense with the natural sciences. In that pursuit, efforts at achieving scientific legitimacy resulted in a number of precarious tensions for theology and theological education in the unique position between church and academy. In the following, therefore, I present some of the major shifts, developments, and challenges of this formative epoch.

Enlightenment, French Revolution, and Theology in the Modern University

The Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic era subjected universities—and theological faculties in particular—to an unrelenting onslaught of hostility. As the armies of the French Revolution spread across Europe, they seized university endowments for the state and suppressed theological and other faculties in favour of professional and technical

academies. Universities as institutions appeared on the brink of collapse, subject to the same overall fate as the fading *ancien régime*. In 1789 Europe counted 143 universities; by 1815 there were only 83. France had abolished its twenty-four universities, while forming specialized schools and independent faculties in twelve towns as their replacement. Spain lost fifteen of its twenty-five universities. Seven Protestant and nine Catholic universities in Germany folded in this period, and those that survived did so mainly because they were in relatively better financial shape and received some state support from the newly expanded territorial states established by Napoleon. From the 1820s to the 1840s, Swiss reformers proposed collapsing all of Switzerland's universities into one remaining national institution (Rüegg 2004; Brockliss 1997).

Already in the middle of the eighteenth century, universities across Europe received censure as backward institutions, while theological faculties 'were seen as especially benighted. Seedbeds of obscurantism, continuing the Wars of Religion in their uncompromising polemics, these age-old fixtures of the university—in the eyes of Voltaire, d'Holbach, or Lessing—were obstinate repositories of darker times, yawning sinkholes in the path of progress' (Howard 2006, 5). In the judgement of Enlightenment champions and *philosophes* like the French thinker Denis Diderot—who had once intended to enter the clergy—theological faculties generated only 'controversy' and 'fanaticism', not piety. Degree-holders had become 'the most useless, intractable, and dangerous subjects of the state', Diderot wrote in a political memorandum on education drafted for Empress Catherine the Great of Russia (Diderot 1875, 438). Immanuel Kant's well-known work, *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), argued that theology had long lost its 'royal dignity'; the philosophy faculty, in turn, stood poised to divest it of its crown in the realm of science (Kant 1979). Elsewhere Kant revelled in what he called 'the philosophy faculty's right to sit as an opposition bench against the theological faculty' (Kant 1924, 688).

Critics, even within theological circles, pointed frequently towards theological faculties for perpetuating the lives of antiquated ideas, trading in a regressive ‘guild theology’ divorced from the enlightened improvement of human society (Schwarz 1854, 63). Many sympathized with Baron d’Holbach, who sneered in 1772, the ‘science of theology . . . is a continual insult to human reason’ (d’Holbach 1971, 9). Joachim Heinrich Campe, a prominent educational advisor in the German lands, relayed similar views in a number of widely circulated essays on pedagogical reform. ‘Perhaps many think that the universities have educated great men, so that living and teaching at a university is the condition of becoming great’, he declared. ‘But how many great men lived outside universities! One thinks of Leibniz, Reimarus, Voltaire, Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn . . . sincere men who had and still have decisive influence on the culture of learning (*Wissenschaft*) and art and on the improvement of humanity. It is therefore not easy to see how the universities are to form such great teachers and models for humanity. Aids to the development of the mind exist abundantly outside the universities; and contact with [university] scholars might well contribute little to this development’ (Campe 1792, 218–19). By 1802, the Berlin physician and political philosopher J. B. Erhard derided theological faculties as entirely at odds with modern reason, arguing for their expulsion from universities (Erhard 1802).

The University of Berlin was established in 1810 precisely in this calamitous context. A landmark in the history of universities, Berlin resulted from a remarkable Prussian political initiative in response to Prussia’s humiliating loss of the University of Halle to Napoleon in 1806. The initiative attracted proposals from the likes of Friedrich Schelling, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Henrich Steffens, and Schleiermacher, each indebted to concepts in German idealism and romanticism, addressing the structure and ethos of a new university and the proper balance between the free pursuit of knowledge and the interests of the state (Anrich 1956). Schleiermacher’s memorandum, *Occasional Thoughts on*

Universities in the German Sense (1808), functioned as the ‘intellectual charter’ of the new university in Berlin, the ‘first European university founded under purely national, secular auspices, bearing the imprimatur of neither pope nor emperor’ (Paulsen 1906, 50; Howard 2006, 130). As the leading unequivocally and self-consciously ‘modern’ university, embracing a new ‘research imperative’, Berlin formed the pattern for countless other institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Turner 1973; Schwinges 2001). The so-called ‘Prussian model’ or ‘German model’ achieved astonishing international success and rose to become the global standard of higher education.

Theology’s right to a seat in the new university, however, was hardly without dispute. Fichte’s proposal, the most radical, followed arguments set forth previously by Schelling for training students in the organic unity of the sciences before advancing towards specialization, but curtailed drastically the list of subjects in which one might specialize, leaving only the ‘philosophical academy’. The ‘higher’ faculties of theology, law, and medicine had no place in Fichte’s model because, he reasoned, they had emerged as historical accidents. The existence of these practical disciplines stemmed only from the state’s need to train clergy, lawyers, and physicians. Students might still train for a career in a practical discipline, he granted, but that education would have to occur outside of the university in vocational schools or ‘other self-contained institutions’ (Anrich 1956, 155).

To get a sense of the force of Fichte’s argument, one might compare it to the position of John Henry Newman in the 1850s. In a series of lectures on ‘The Idea of a University’, delivered during his stint as rector at the recently established Catholic University of Ireland (University College Dublin), Newman elaborated on the theme of the university as, fundamentally, ‘a place of teaching universal knowledge’ (Newman 1996, 3). He insisted that theology had a rightful home in the university because it shared in universal knowledge. Without theology, the university could not claim to represent the totality of human learning.

‘Religious doctrine is knowledge’, Newman averred, ‘in as full a sense as Newton’s doctrine is knowledge. University Teaching without Theology is simply unphilosophical. Theology has at least as good a right to claim a place there as Astronomy’ (Newman 1996, 40). To establish a new university without provisions for theological instruction would be ‘an intellectual absurdity’ (Newman 1996, 25). Fichte’s line of thought could not have diverged more sharply.

Schleiermacher’s argument, however, exhibited rather conservative features. Traditionally, he said, the Christian Church founded theological faculties ‘in order to preserve the wisdom of the Fathers, not to lose for the future what in the past had been achieved in discerning truth from error; to provide a historical basis, a sure and certain direction and a common spirit to the further development of doctrine and church’. Moreover, ‘as the state came to be bound more and more closely with the church, it also had to sanction these institutions and place them under its care’ (Anrich 1956, 258). Faculties of medicine and law had similar origins, formed by the respective needs to treat ailments of the human body and to adjudicate sociopolitical disputes. Borrowing from Schelling’s important lectures *On University Studies* (Schelling 1966), Schleiermacher stated that these ‘positive faculties each arose from the need to establish an indispensable praxis securely in theory and the tradition of knowledge’ (Anrich 1956, 257–8; Purvis 2015). Such practical requirements continued to justify the presence of theology in an institution of science. Ultimately, Schleiermacher’s vision held sway, and the university duly incorporated faculties of philosophy, law, medicine, and theology. Indeed, ‘Schleiermacher’s model university structure became the basic organizational pattern for all German universities up to the present time’ (Fallon 1980, 36).

Protestant University Theology

Theology's institutionalization in the modern research university and the need to classify it in an overall system of scientific knowledge opened up a number of quandaries: To what extent do the four traditional subdivisions of theology—exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical—form a harmonious ensemble? What unites them to one another, and how do they relate to other subjects in the university like philosophy, history, linguistics, or even the natural sciences? How does theology as a discipline integrate its conceptually and methodologically distinct subfields—which ramified throughout the nineteenth century, arguably at a rate dramatically higher than ever before, and asserted their own autonomy—let alone newcomers like religious studies, or theological investigation shorn of ecclesial engagement? Such queries, which tend to follow the German tradition and bear the collective name of 'theological encyclopedia', preoccupied an impressive list of university theologians across the modern age (Purvis 2016).

To answer these questions, and to coincide with the founding of the University of Berlin and the new theological faculty, Schleiermacher produced a slender volume on academic theology: the *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology* (1811; 2nd edn, 1830). More than any other work, the *Brief Outline* proved monumental in setting the trajectory for modern academic theology—attempting to renew Protestantism, pursue 'science' (*Wissenschaft*), and claim the spirit of modernity.

Though most works in the genre of theological encyclopedia tended towards a fourfold curricular pattern of exegesis, church history, dogmatics, and practical theology, Schleiermacher organized the theological sciences according to an idiosyncratic, threefold scheme of philosophical, historical, and practical theology. The first branch promoted the philosophy of religion, where the empirical and historical nature of a given expression of Christianity might be compared through speculative and historical reasoning with an 'ideal' Christianity. The second branch of study, historical theology, included exegesis, the history

of the church, and, in a somewhat radical move, dogmatics. The final branch secured theology to the needs of the religious community. Philosophy represented theology's 'root', history the 'body', and practice the 'crown' (Schleiermacher 2011, 12–14).

As a 'positive science', theology for Schleiermacher did not possess the same intrinsic academic legitimacy as philosophy. Without a vital connection to the ecclesiastical community—the Christian Church—knowledge of theology 'ceases to be theological and devolves to those sciences to which it belongs according to its varied content' (Schleiermacher 2011, 1–2). Biblical studies might as well be undertaken entirely within philological or archaeological disciplines if divorced from the religious community. Church leadership, then, served as the goal of all theological study. But a focus on practical theology alone could not grant the theologian entry into the modern university. Though academic theology's coherency would disintegrate without the practical purpose of church government, the theologian must, nevertheless, be grounded in the philosophy faculty and the study of pure science (*Wissenschaft*) (Schleiermacher 2011, 3). In his famous formulation, 'If one should imagine both a religious interest and a scientific spirit united in the highest degree and with the finest balance for the purpose of theoretical and practical activity alike, that would be the idea of the "prince of the church"' (Schleiermacher 2011, 4). Schleiermacher allowed that theology must redefine its methods along *wissenschaftliche* and historical lines to find a place in the modern university, but nevertheless attempted to preserve a modified form of the 'traditional' focus on the church. In the end, the purpose of theology determined theology's definition, not theology's content—but purpose here underscored training for church leadership more than edification in divine wisdom.

Much of the unity of pre-Enlightenment theological education had roots in an understanding of theology as a *habitus* or *scientia practica*, combining piety and learning. Schleiermacher's *Brief Outline* was a watershed in the history of theology, incorporating a

new organic, idealist sense of science—understood primarily in historical and critical terms—directly into theology’s very definition. Fittingly, Albrecht Ritschl judged Schleiermacher’s *Brief Outline* as the ‘lawgiver’ in modern theology, determining theology’s *modus operandi* and overall identity so formidably that any deviations from the text stood out like flagrant transgressions of law (Ritschl 1888, 487). In fact, Schleiermacher’s programme in the *Brief Outline* transformed nearly the entirety of nineteenth-century Christian thought. In many respects, that programme emerged from the European-wide crisis for the modern university and university theology.

The resulting notion of theology as a science of the modern research university helped drive modern biblical criticism, associated with names like W. M. L. de Wette, David Friedrich Strauss, and Julius Wellhausen (Frei 1974). Strauss scandalized a burgeoning reading public in 1835 with his *Life of Jesus*. In Strauss’s view, proper exegesis unfettered the biblical narratives from the weight of supposed ‘non-mythical’ history. A firestorm surrounding his short-lived appointment to Zurich’s theological faculty in 1839 even led to the overthrow of Zurich’s cantonal government by the rural population.

The 1830s similarly mark the beginnings of an attempt to reimagine the identity of the Church of England, known as the Oxford Movement. The Movement’s primary leaders were all connected with the University of Oxford—John Henry Newman (before his conversion to Catholicism), John Keble, Edward Bouverie Pusey, and Richard Hurrell Froude. Discoursing on the many social, political, and ecclesiastical implications of modernity and liberalism for Anglicans, these scholars played a prominent role in the character of Oxford theology and Anglican religious instruction more broadly (Nockles 1991; Matthews 1990). In theology, at least, it is surely too strong to say that ‘Oxford went German after the defeat of the Oxford Movement’, other than in the broader university’s occasional, guarded embrace of professorial research in the German sense—heralded in Max Weber’s celebrated address,

‘Science as Vocation’—but it bears noting that the Oxford Honour School of Theology was not established until 1870 (Momigliano 1975, 128; Weber 1946, 129–56).

Issues in Catholic Education

Catholic university theology in the nineteenth century grappled with the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) condemned by Pius IX, the definition of the Immaculate Conception (1854), the breakdown of the Papal States, the First Vatican Council, Europe’s ‘culture wars’ (*Kulturkämpfe*), and fledgling ecumenical efforts. The Reformation continued to linger just below the surface, dividing confessional groups, prompting recent descriptions of the period as a ‘second confessional era’ (Blaschke 2000; Steinhoff 2004).

The church-state question impinged notably on Catholic theological instruction. Leaders in the Italian nationalist *Risorgimento* called for an end to the Papal States as part of Italian unification, embracing the maxim, ‘a free church in a free state’ (*libera chiesa in libero stato*) (Kertzer 2004, 86). The Vatican’s role as intellectual and spiritual guardian encountered considerable opposition, which a brief glance at the priest and academic Ignaz von Döllinger highlights. In 1826, four years after his ordination, Döllinger began teaching theology at the University of Munich, where he would go on to become one of the most eminent Catholic scholars of the century. Initially harbouring Ultramontane sympathies, he soon established a number of important contacts with members of the Catholic theological faculty at the University of Tübingen; John Henry Newman, William Gladstone, and Lord Acton in England; and various Catholic liberals across Europe. In 1848–9, he served as a delegate to the German assembly at Frankfurt—often termed the ‘parliament of professors’—which attempted unsuccessfully to unify Germany under a liberal constitution (Bischof 1997).

In a celebrated speech delivered at a congress of Catholic scholars in Munich in 1863, Döllinger declared that German academic theologians defended Catholicism with modern

‘artillery’, while Rome was stuck fighting with ‘bows and arrows’. He drew a line between scholastic theology, associated with Rome, and new developments in historical theology, which flowed from Germany’s prestigious universities. Scholasticism neglected recent scientific advances in biblical and historical studies. Church authority, he continued, should not weigh in on intellectual matters that scholarship might eventually resolve. Rather, science should inform the life of the church, ‘for the church cannot exist without a forward-looking theology’ (Döllinger 1890). Many followed Acton in championing the address as ‘the dawn of a new era’ in Catholic university theology (Acton 1952, 199).

Pius IX denounced such claims in *Tuas libenter* (1863) and the *Syllabus of Errors*. Sections of the latter condemned theology’s newfound position as a modern, critical, university science. Proposition Twelve rejected the view that ‘the decrees of the Apostolic See and of the Roman congregations impede the true progress of science’; Thirteen denounced Döllinger’s declaration that ‘the method and principles by which the old scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer suitable to the demands of our times and to the progress of the sciences’ (Denzinger and Hünermann 2012, 2901–80).

In the run-up to the Vatican Council of 1869–70, Döllinger criticized the idea of papal infallibility as church dogma. Raising papal infallibility ‘into an article of faith’, he said, would ‘cripple all intellectual movement and scientific activity in the Catholic Church’ and simultaneously ‘build up a new wall of partition . . . the strongest and most impenetrable of all, between that Church and the religious communities separated from her’ (Döllinger 1869, xxvi). Despite the Council’s promulgation of the doctrine, Döllinger refused to accept it and was excommunicated in 1871 (cf. Howard 2014).

Traditional Catholic circles also faced confrontations with works of biblical criticism, not least of which was the popular sensation, *Life of Jesus* (1863), by the French intellectual Ernest Renan. An ex-seminarian, Renan was dismissed from his chair in Hebrew at the

Collège de France after denying the divinity of Jesus in his inaugural lecture of February 1862 (Priest 2015, 19–68).

Ultramontanism, emphasizing absolute papal authority, picked up again with Pius X, who condemned modernism as ‘the source of all heresies’ in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (1907) and required all priests and teachers of theology to take the anti-modernist oath as a means of ‘flushing out those theologians who were guilty of secret modernist thinking and to lead to their removal from teaching and pastoral office and thus to prevent an internal erosion of the faith and life of the church’ (Reinhard 1934, 253). One of those was Alfred Loisy, a French Catholic priest, who had been professor of Hebrew at the Catholic University of Paris from 1881 and of Exegesis from 1889. He was dismissed from his post in 1893 and ultimately excommunicated in 1908 for his vision of biblical criticism as autonomous of theological doctrine (Theobald 1985).

Even among these currents, though, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the spread of neo-scholasticism, a constructive attempt to rehabilitate the tradition of Thomas Aquinas. Two diocesan seminaries in Italy, those of Piacenza and Naples, were early hubs of interest for the scholastic revival. In Piacenza, Viacenzo Buzzetti taught Thomistic philosophy and theology to a number of students, including the brothers Serafino and Domenico Sordi, who went on to become significant members of the Society of Jesus, helping bring Thomism to the attention of Gioacchino Pecci, later Pope Leo XIII (Gleason 1995, 106). Giuseppe Pecci, older brother of Leo XIII, and the German Jesuit Joseph Kleutgen—dubbed ‘Thomas reborn’ (*Thomas redivivus*)—likewise proved instrumental in the campaign to make neo-scholastic Thomism the dominant Catholic philosophy, which received support through Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) (Walters 2013).

Other imaginative proposals for Catholic thought and higher education emanated from Tübingen’s Catholic theological faculty. The so-called ‘Catholic Tübingen School’, led

by Johann Adam Möhler and Johann Sebastian Drey, both of whom drew deeply from the well of German romantic idealism, paved the way for notions like ‘development of doctrine’ (*Entwicklung der Lehre*). They attempted to accomplish for Catholicism what Schleiermacher’s *Brief Outline* had done for Protestantism. The School has been regarded as a forerunner to the programme of reform articulated at the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) (Burtchaell 1985).

For Roman Catholic theological education generally, no work exercised as much influence as the *Theological Lectures* (1835–42) by the Jesuit theologian Giovanni Perrone, who held the chair in dogmatic theology and was rector and prefect of studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University from 1824 until his death fifty-two years later. An important theological advisor to Gregory XVI and Pius IX, teacher to Leo XIII, and architect of the 1854 definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Perrone also exercised some guidance on John Henry Newman in the latter’s famous *Essay on the Development of Doctrine* (1854). The *Theological Lectures* ran to thirty-four editions in nine volumes, while a compendium of the text reached forty-seven editions. Perrone’s curriculum entailed four years of study. The first year covered methodological and doctrinal topics relating to the Roman Catholic Church, God, creation, Christ, and the communion of saints. Year two dealt with Rome’s seven sacraments, and questions about the relation between faith and reason and the nature of ecclesiastical authority filled the third and fourth years of study (Shea 2015).

The Seminary and the New World

The role of religion in nineteenth-century American higher education is a complex story of disestablishment and secularization, paradox and irony. The American university system was built for the most part on top of clearly evangelical Protestant colleges, many of which evolved into major research universities, had ‘clergymen-presidents who taught courses defending [biblical] Christianity and who encouraged periodic campus revivals. Yet within

half a century the universities that emerged from these evangelical colleges, while arguably carrying forward the spirit of their evangelical forebears, had become conspicuously inhospitable to the letter of such evangelicalism. By the 1920s the evangelical Protestantism of the old-time colleges had been effectively excluded from leading university classrooms' (Marsden 1994, 4).

English and Scottish models directly influenced academic theology and the broader university system across America. In 1636, the year of the Anne Hutchison controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Harvard College was established. Its first president would almost certainly have been the renowned English Puritan William Ames (1576–1633) if not for his untimely death while preparing to move from the University of Franeker in Holland to the New World. Training clergy represented Harvard's primary purpose, as it did for Yale (1701) and many of America's educational institutions from the colonial era through the middle of the nineteenth century. These institutions bore witness to a curious amalgam of church-state arrangements, which led to a deep and lasting ambiguity in American church-related education. William and Mary, for instance—chartered in 1639 and opened in 1707—occupied an integral part of the Anglican establishment. Situated across from the statehouse in Williamsburg, Virginia, it received support from state revenues even as its faculty were required to be Anglican and were almost all clergymen. By 1780, though, Thomas Jefferson had persuaded the school to sack its two professorships in divinity (Marsden 1994, 54, 70; Miller 1990).

While Congregationalists and Presbyterians from England and Scotland made their mark, it was arguably German Protestant university theology that left an indelible footprint in the intellectual, institutional, and religious terrain of nineteenth-century American society, aided in part by the advent of steamship travel across the waters of the Atlantic. Between 1810 and 1870, 15.9 per cent of all American students had travelled to Europe in order to

study and were enrolled in German theological faculties (Diehl 1978, 5). In one American theologian's characteristic view of German academy theology around 1835: 'There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, so we were in their sight' (Purvis 2014, 652–3). Inspired by German scholarship (*Wissenschaft*) and the German university system, educators at Michigan (founded in 1817), Johns Hopkins (1876), Chicago (1890), and other places sought to transform their own institutions into research universities in line with the German model. Andrew Dickson White, Cornell's first president (1865), proclaimed the University of Berlin 'my ideal of a university not only realized, but extended and glorified' (White 1905, 291).

Perhaps the foremost development in America, though, was the American seminary, a novel institution for Protestants. Though some European universities possessed homiletic, preaching seminars (*Predigarseminare*) like that established by the University of Heidelberg in 1838, those differed from actual Protestant seminaries. Neither fish (college) nor fowl (university), the seminary sought to evoke the rigorous sixteenth-century academies and schools for training ministers, like that established in Calvin's Geneva. Yet, as a mostly professional track, it contributed to a persisting church-versus-academy struggle within American higher education.

In 1808 Andover Theological Seminary was founded in Massachusetts—the first Protestant seminary in the New World—in response to a perceived rise of Unitarianism at Harvard. The second on the scene was Princeton Seminary, founded in 1812 by some of the more orthodox Christian trustees of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) as a separate institution under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. By the 1830s, the seminary movement was in full swing. The new institutions enkindled greater American interest in European religious thought and prompted 'the great age of the learned theological quarterly' from the 1820s to the American Civil War and beyond, a key component in theology's

increasing professionalization. ‘As late as 1860, the only graduate education of any intellectual substance to be found in the United States was theological education, and the four largest seminaries were Presbyterian (Princeton, Union in New York City, Western in Pittsburgh) and Congregational (Andover)’ (Noll 2002, 254–5). Paramount among these educators was Princeton’s Charles Hodge, who taught over three thousand seminarians over the course of his fifty-six-year career (Gutjahr 2011, 3–4).

Most seminaries followed the practices established at Andover and Princeton, in which a three-year course of study progressed from biblical literature to systematic theology and finally practical theology—not unlike the curriculum developed by Schleiermacher—gradually encouraging specialized learning in each branch of study. As theological education migrated from colleges and ministerial apprenticeships to seminaries, the professional ‘tools’ of learning also shifted. In some instances, wealthy benefactors allowed schools to buy the personal libraries of prominent German and other European scholars: for example, Baptist Theological Seminary in Rochester, NY acquired the volumes owned by August Neander and New York’s Union Seminary landed a 13,000-volume collection that had belonged to a Benedictine monastery in Paderborn before the monastery’s secularization under Napoleon (Clark 2011, 88–92).

Similarly, textbooks by Protestants like Neander and the Swiss-German church historian Karl Rudolf Hagenbach proved tremendously popular across Europe and America, made regular appearances on university and seminary reading lists, and established firmly the fourfold pattern of theological instruction. Hagenbach’s introduction to the study of theology, *Encyclopedia and Methodology of the Theological Sciences*, grounded largely in the pioneering work of Schleiermacher, went through twelve editions between 1833 and 1889. Portions of it and his other textbooks soon appeared in Hungarian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, English, Russian, and Chinese. The English version of the *Encyclopedia*, moreover, enjoyed

virtually unmatched success in shaping theological study in the United States due to its reception by prominent ‘transatlantic’ academics like Philip Schaff and its combination of learned piety and adaptability for use in seminars and survey courses for an unusually broad range of Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Unitarian, and Transcendentalist theologians and church historians (Purvis 2014, 655–83).

State, Science, and Religion: Trends and Challenges

Operations at universities in general and theological faculties in particular reflected broader intellectual, political, and social developments—realignments from state-building, the ebbing and flowing of scholarly ideals—including ‘neutrality’, ‘objectivity’, and the ‘absence of presuppositions’, whose proponents considered as threatening to theology’s ecclesial commitments—and various other processes of modernization, industrialization, and cultural change stretching across local, national, and transnational contexts. One of the most noteworthy features of the second half of the nineteenth century is the extent to which theologians tended to seek legitimacy by appealing to the political community of the modern nation-state and the academic community of science, rather than Christianity’s historic creeds, confessions, and traditions of ecclesiastical authority.

Declining credal structures could be observed early in the eighteenth century, even if universities continued in many cases to require confessional oaths. In Great Britain, the University Tests Act in 1871 removed the requirement of subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles for masters degrees at Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham—corresponding provisions for undergraduates having been lifted only a few years before (Inman 2014, 107). At Berlin, the doctoral oath required of students upon completion of their studies lost much of its prior significance. Candidates were expected not to teach anything contrary to Holy Scripture, the ecumenical creeds, and the Augsburg Confession, but strict distinctions between Lutherans and the Reformed were no longer enforced. Despite its lingering existence, the oath ‘suggests

that the notion of the theological faculty as the keeper of a particular orthodoxy, challenged already in the eighteenth century, had now begun to reach the end of its line. Theology, instead, sought a new scholarly validation' (Howard 2006, 193).

Scholars of modern Germany speak, in turn, of a self-aggrandizing 'tutelary state' or 'culture state' in Prussia in the aftermath of its defeat by Napoleon. Prussia's 'Ministry of Culture' (*Kultusministerium*), in fact, which oversaw universities and churches, functioned as the state's 'ministry of ecclesiastical, educational, and medical affairs'. The Ministry strove to strengthen the scientific and professional credentials of university faculties through, for instance, the cultivation and regulation of research seminars in the university. Evidence suggests that Karl von Altenstein, Prussia's first Minister of Culture, read personally and even marked some of the theology seminar papers submitted to his Ministry (Howard 2006, 261–3). Relatedly, a notable textbook introducing students to the formal study of theology from 1893 declared that academic theology bore no responsibility 'to manufacture piety', but only 'to research what Christianity is and [how] it . . . operates'. Alluding to the opening lines of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the text stated: the question, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" is not answered by "science" (*Wissenschaft*)' (Heinrici 1893, 9–10). By then, a 'frightful gulf' had developed between theological faculties and churches in the course of the nineteenth century (Troeltsch 1908, 97). Academic theology found itself pulled by two realms, increasingly torn, in the famous parlance of antiquity, between Jerusalem and Athens.

Another case in point comes from the German speculative university theologian Richard Rothe. In one of the earliest uses of 'secularization' in the modern sense of de-Christianization, Rothe wrote about the Christian Church itself becoming 'superfluous', contending that the state and its institutions, including universities, were emerging as 'the only truly appropriate cosmic entity and organ of [Christianity's] historical efficacy. The

church is secularized in the same proportion as the state is desecularized' (Rothe 1837, 85; cf. Hunter 2015). As he put it elsewhere: 'The moral community, the modern state, has done more to bring man to a condition befitting the will of Christ than all the churches of Jerusalem or Rome or Wittenberg or Geneva' (Barth 2001, 590). By contrast, Søren Kierkegaard, who had studied at the University of Berlin—and was himself hardly a confessionally oriented thinker—mourned in the middle of the century that 'Christianity has completely merged with [modern] science—that is, Christianity no longer exists' (Kierkegaard 1975, 463).

Variations on these debates reached a high point in the 1920s in a series of highly charged exchanges between Adolf von Harnack—Berlin professor, Director of the Royal Library, Secretary for the Prussian Academy of Science, and President of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society (later Max Planck Institutes)—and his upstart student, Karl Barth. In a number of addresses, Harnack offered persuasive arguments to retain theological faculties in the German university system against both conservative churchmen sceptical of 'scientific' theology and liberal detractors sceptical of modern theology's residual confessionality and 'other-worldly' beliefs, at times echoing Schleiermacher's formative arguments (Rumscheidt 1973). He had even campaigned loudly for theology's inclusion at the recently founded University of Frankfurt (1914). Frankfurt's endowment came from private donors, many of whom were Jewish and uninterested in setting up a Christian faculty of theology (Kluke 1972, 110–37).

Concerned that academic theology, in its quest for cultural recognition, had largely surrendered its mission to pursue a sapiential understanding of 'God and divine things', in the older vocabulary, Barth and other dialectical theologians criticized the very arrangements that Harnack had come to symbolize. On the heels of his own first academic appointment, an 'honorary professorship' in theology at the University of Göttingen, Barth thundered in the

address, ‘The Word of God and the Task of the Ministry’ (1922): ‘Only when a theological faculty undertakes to say, or at least points out the need for saying, what the other [faculties] dare not say, or dare not say aloud, only when it keeps reminding them that a chaos, though wonderful, is not a cosmos, only when it is a question mark and an exclamation point on the outermost edge of scientific possibility—or rather, in contrast to the philosophy faculty, beyond the outermost edge—only then is there a reason for it’ (Barth 1928, 183–217). Aftershocks of the First World War, furthermore, shattered notions of theological and cultural progress.

The dilemmas of science and faith triggered by the modern academy often led to complex, multifaceted outcomes, which cannot easily be reduced to simple tales of declension. One instance comes from the noteworthy theologian Herman Bavinck. In his 1883 inaugural address at Kampen Theological Seminary, the training ground for conservatives in the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands, Bavinck proposed a course of action for effectively turning back the clock: ‘[Theology] is *the* science, “Regina Scientiarum”’, he said. ‘High she stands above all the sciences. . . . Not as a favour, but as a right, the first place, the place of honour, is due to her. If this place is denied her, she should be proud enough not to degrade herself as a slave. A queen she remains, even if she is defamed.’ His own four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* illustrated, nevertheless, that the Dutch professor, who succeeded the prodigious statesman, theologian, and journalist Abraham Kuyper at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1902, engaged assiduously with modern science (Bavinck 1883, 4).

Theology’s general striving to claim the mantle of ‘science’ and academic legitimacy, adapting to myriad modernizing and secularizing forces, helped it to maintain a respectable reputation in the academy for most of the century, despite vocal gainsayers. As the nineteenth century lurched forward, though, theology’s academic standing faced an ever increasing

number of challengers, especially in the new emerging fields falling under the umbrella of religious studies—movements heralding the science of religion, the history of religions, and comparative religious history. As university theology began in many cases to turn from dogmatic and apologetic considerations to scientific historical, philological, and sociological modes of enquiry, theological faculties questioned the rationale behind their traditional exclusive focus on Christianity.

Non-Western and non-Christian religious expressions captured the imaginations of scholars, just as artefacts, manuscripts, and other material found their way to Europe and beyond through the hands of missionaries, colonialists, explorers, and others seeking out the treasures of the ‘Orient’ (Marchand 2009, 252–91). As the trailblazing Oxford don Max Müller contended: ‘He who knows only one [religion], knows none’ (Müller 1869, 3). Universities began to establish chairs in the comparative science of religion and general religious history. The University of Basle formed the vanguard, dedicating a chair in general religion as early as 1840. Other Swiss universities in Lausanne (1871) and Geneva (1873) joined later. Amsterdam, Gröningen, Leiden, and Utrecht in the Netherlands set up similar chairs in 1877–8, as part of a larger process in which theological faculties were stripped of their formal ecclesiastical connections. Uppsala (1878) in Sweden, Paris’s Collège de France (1880), Brussels (1884), Oxford (1886), and Copenhagen (1900), among others, followed suit. In 1900 the Catholic theological faculty at the University of Budapest drew up plans directing the professor of dogmatics to incorporate new courses in both the history of religion and comparative religion. Japan’s Imperial University, founded in 1877, established a chair in ‘the science of religion’ in 1903. In North America, the University of Chicago, while not the first American university to establish a chair in comparative religious history, raised considerably the field’s popularity (Jordan 1905, 580–606; Molendijk and Pels 1998; Hart 2002).

Conclusion

Since 1789, theological education had undergone a series of dramatic transformations, bringing forth new forms of pedagogy, ministerial preparation, scholarship, and overall self-understanding. The subsequent history of the nineteenth century did little to undermine the force of Hegel's quip about the importance of universities for theology—if anything, the significance of the academy for theology only increased. With the outstanding success of Schleiermacher's programme, a new critical cast of investigation prevailed over theology's branches, growing ultimately independent from questions of either divine revelation—as in the early modern period—or ecclesial engagement—as in the initial settlement reached in the institutionalization of the idea of theology as science at Berlin. Finally, the rise of religious studies and global comparative religion at the end of the century unsettled profoundly traditional theological enquiry. In short, the evolution of theological education and its institutions over the nineteenth century produced some of the most notable developments for Christian reflection, and the debates of the period continue to mould and inform theology and education today.

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Chapter Outline

Introduction

Enlightenment, French Revolution, and Theology in the Modern University

Protestant University Theology

Issues in Catholic Education

The Seminary and the New World

State, Science, and Religion: Trends and Challenges

Conclusion

References

Suggested Reading

Keywords

theological encyclopedia; academic theology; theology as science; modern research university; religious studies; seminary

Abstract

For theological education, the nineteenth century was one of the most creative and tumultuous periods in the history of Christian thought. Patterns of both deconfessionalization and theological renewal, changes in church-state relations, the rise of the modern research university in Berlin, and new fields like religious studies all contributed to the displacement of theology as the ‘queen of the sciences’ in the wake of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic era. This chapter examines some of the major developments, including the institutionalization of Protestant theology in the modern research university, key issues confronting Catholic scholarship, and the inception of the seminary in North America. Finally, it discusses the challenges modern academic theology faced in its increasing appeal to the political community of the modern nation-state and the academic community of science, rather than Christianity’s historic creeds, confessions, and traditions of ecclesiastical authority.

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